

1 November 2023

Committee Secretariat
Economic Development, Science and Innovation Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Email: eds@parliament.govt.nz

Tēnā koutou katoa

Submission to: Economic Development, Science and Innovation Committee
Subject: Fair Digital News Bargaining Bill
From: Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa (Creative New Zealand)

1. Creative New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Fair Digital News Bargaining Bill.
2. Creative New Zealand **does not** wish to be heard in support of this submission.
3. The key contact person for matters relating to this submission is:

Name: Elizabeth Beale
Position: Co-Manager, Policy & Performance
Email: elizabeth.beale@creativenz.govt.nz

Key points

4. Creative New Zealand **supports** the purpose of the Fair Digital News Bargaining Bill (the Bill), with its underlying aim of better positioning news media entities to be viable in a digital marketplace.
5. Creative New Zealand **supports** the inclusion of ‘the arts’ in the definition of **news content** (section 5(2)(e) of the Bill).
6. Arts and culture media coverage is vital for building connection, social cohesion and collective national identity. Strengthened arts and culture media coverage makes an important contribution towards the broader outcomes of the Bill, including a healthy democracy, countering misinformation, enhancement of social cohesion and the wellbeing of all New Zealanders.
7. Independent research shows that, as a country, we’re more positive than ever about the role the arts play in our lives.¹ And while the audience for arts and culture is significant, with

¹ *New Zealanders and the Arts—Ko Aotearoa me ōna Toi* (2020): <https://creativenz.govt.nz/Development-and-resources/New-Zealanders-and-the-arts---Ko-Aotearoa-me-ona-Toi>

3.9 million adult New Zealanders (16+ years) in the market,² dedicated arts and culture reporting has notably decreased over the last decade. There are now very few reporters that cover the arts exclusively or in depth. This creates a disconnect between value and visibility.

8. There is a clear relationship between strong arts and culture media coverage and a thriving creative sector. Media act as a crucial bridge between artists and the public – giving artists a platform to amplify their stories.
9. Creative New Zealand therefore **strongly supports** initiatives such as this Bill that will contribute to ensuring Aotearoa New Zealand has a viable news media landscape and consequently strengthened arts and culture coverage.

Key information

10. By the end of 2023, Creative New Zealand will have released two reports looking at arts and culture media coverage in Aotearoa New Zealand. These reports collectively find that:
 - We need arts and culture coverage:
 - it shapes our nation’s identity, contributes to our collective well-being, and fosters a healthy democracy
 - it is also critical to the health of our arts and cultural sector
 - but, our media (and cultural) sectors are under-resourced and under strain
 - and this has created a deficit in arts and culture coverage.
 - We believe addressing this deficit will require greater investment in our media landscape, including increasing capacity in specialised areas such as the arts, as well as the media’s ability to reflect the diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand.
11. Our support for the Bill centres around our belief that a media landscape that is better resourced will contribute to strengthened arts and media coverage, with consequent benefits to the arts and culture sector, including its sustainability.

Summary of key findings from the reports

12. The first report, *Visibility Matters*, released in June 2023, was a piece of quantitative research undertaken by Isentia looking at arts and culture media coverage, reporting and artist portrayal in New Zealand media between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022.³

13. Findings from the report include:

- **Discussion of arts and culture is often crowded out of traditional media**

Of total media coverage over the period, 13 percent was related to arts and culture. This is compared to about one-quarter of media coverage focused on sport.

Compounding this difference, a significant portion of the media content that related to arts and culture (75 percent) was driven by TV, film and popular music. This means only 3.25 percent of all news coverage in New Zealand related to other artforms, sector news, cultural heritage and various cultural activities.

² *Audience Atlas Aotearoa* (2020) Summary: https://creativenz.govt.nz/-/media/Project/Creative-NZ/CreativeNZ/Legacy-Page-Documents/20220126-audienceatlassummary_v40.pdf

³ *Visibility Matters – Kia kitea ngā toi e te marea* (April 2023): <https://creativenz.govt.nz/news-and-blog/2023/06/27/04/22/37/visibility-matters-arts-and-culture-benchmark-media-research-launched>

Events are the primary driver of media coverage, while artists profiles reach the greatest audience. Research data shows large audience sizes for artist profiles and content on arts and culture's sociocultural impact. While there is an audience for this type of content, it is being crowded out.

- **Fewer than one in five journalists (19 percent) have a more specialised background in the sector**

Most of the arts and culture coverage in New Zealand media is undertaken by journalists with specialisations other than arts and culture. The most common being General news (36 percent), followed by Lifestyle (6 percent), Entertainment/local events (6 percent), Business/technology (1 percent), and Other (32 percent). This impacts the depth and breadth of coverage.

- **There is a lack of diversity in arts and culture coverage**

The research found that several communities were underrepresented in coverage – 10 percent references Māori arts and culture, and Pacific arts and culture and artists were present in less than 5 percent of coverage. The starkest area of underrepresentation is New Zealand Asian arts and culture and artists, at 2 percent of analysed coverage. There was also limited coverage of LGBTQI+, gender diverse and Deaf and disabled artists.

- **There is a significant opportunity to grow the coverage of arts and culture**

This would require dedicated arts and culture journalists to help drive depth and variety, however, currently there are very few of these journalists across the major media networks.

14. The second qualitative report, *New Mirrors: Strengthening arts and culture media for Aotearoa New Zealand*, which is due to be released in November 2023 and published on Creative New Zealand's website, starts from the premise that arts and culture (and its coverage):

- help shape our nation's identity
- contribute to our collective wellbeing
- foster a healthy democracy.

By:

- helping to build audiences
- deepening engagement
- contributing to the sustainability of artists' careers and the ongoing health of the sector.

15. The report is based on over 50 interviews with arts and media professionals, including editors, journalists, artists, publicists and commissioners, and has been supported by a media advisory group.

16. The report provides insights into challenges in the current arts media ecosystem and offers recommendations for what might be done to strengthen the arts media ecology, so that artists and arts organisations can be more visible.

17. Key findings from this qualitative research reflect the findings of the first report and include the following.
- **Significant transformation of the media landscape** over the past 20 years, including the shift to online and declining advertising revenue, has led to a halving of the number of journalists working in Aotearoa New Zealand between 2006 and 2018.⁴
 - **When the pressure is on, media tend to deprioritise arts and culture coverage.** Industry experts suggest there are very few full-time dedicated arts reporting roles left, and even major publications with millions of New Zealanders as their audience have just one reporter looking at the arts, amongst other topics.
 - **A compounding factor is that the arts and culture sector is stretched just as thin,** with many artists unable to afford publicists and not resourced to navigate the media environment. The recent *A Profile of Creative Professionals* research found that the median income for creatives is \$37,000.⁵
 - **The audience for arts and culture stories are being underserved.** Ninety-six percent of adults in Aotearoa New Zealand (3.9 million people) participate in arts and culture, but de-prioritisation of arts coverage and entrenched views that arts programming isn't essential or won't bring a financial return means that arts content is often relegated to off-peak airtime or publishing space.
 - **For artists, coverage can make a career,** including reviews which can play a key role in supporting artists being programmed or offered work.
 - **We need a media landscape that reflects Aotearoa New Zealand.** As noted through the Isentia report, there are several communities currently underrepresented.
 - **Our regions have been affected disproportionately – addressing this is vital.** In some cases, regional communities create large volumes of work that are never documented because there is no one in the region to tell the stories.

18. These findings are exemplified by the following quotes:

“When I started at The Press in 2007, there was an arts editor, two film reviewers, two or three cultural writers, a feature writer who specialised in culture — that’s all gone now. **That’s all completely gone.** I sort of aspired one day to be an arts editor. That looked like the coolest job in the world. But that ladder I was climbing — they sawed the top off it, as I was climbing. It’s kind of like... oh... okay, cool.’ (Charlie Gates, Senior Reporter for *The Press and Stuff*).

“I’ve seen coverage where if someone had the knowledge and time, and if they did a bit more digging, they would have a whole new deeper story about the arts. **I’ve seen stories where they’ve completely missed where that story could go.** Reporters just **haven’t been covering the arts long enough** to have those skills and knowledge to look more deeply. And because, as a reporter, they’re covering an arts story that day, and then onto something else. **They haven’t got the time to do it.**” (Tom Cardy, Publicist at New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and former Arts Editor at *The Dominion Post*).

⁴ The number of journalists decreased from 4,284 in the 2006 Census to 2,061 in 2018. We note that the definition changed slightly across this period, with the 2006 Census counting ‘reporters, editors and sub-editors’ and the 2018 Census counting ‘print, radio, TV journalists and ‘other writers’. Source: <https://mch.govt.nz/sites/default/files/projects/sapere-report-media-plurality-nz-feb22.pdf>

⁵ *A Profile of Creative Professionals* (2023): <https://creativenz.govt.nz/development-and-resources/research-and-reports/a-profile-of-creative-professionals-2023>

“We’d love to do more long-form deep-dive investigative journalism, but **we don’t always have the budget.**” (Frances Morton, Editor *Sunday* and *Your Weekend*)

“Resourcing is completely different. **Regional daily newspaper newsrooms sometimes will only have two people** in it. Having been in newsrooms, I see the other side of it, and I know they are stretched thin. **There is no resourcing for any kind of arts coverage... Everyone is wearing multiple hats** and having to do multiple things.” (Rosie Dawson-Hewes, Marketing Manager for Toitoti Hawke’s Bay Arts & Events Centre and Te Whare Toi o Heretaunga Hastings City Art Gallery)

“[Media coverage] is really important... there needs to be high-quality writing about this work so that when the institution or the curator goes to the wider acquisitions meeting, they can cite this well-written article that shows the value of what we're doing... **mainstream media coverage also serves the art world** as well... it feeds into broader knowledge and people knowing that this work exists... it has the ability to translate those stories and what you're doing to a broader audience. Those are the times when we've received a lot of love from our families, because then, they get it.” (Bridget Reweti, Artist)

“[Arts media] is a way to write about more diverse perspectives. ... [Having stronger cultural coverage] would **result in a less polarised and reactive media world and social media world**, just from the benefits of being able to appreciate different perspectives and artistic interpretations.” (Claire Mabey, Books Editor at *The Spinoff*)

“The stories that get told through our media in Aotearoa are what shapes the psyche of the nation. If those stories are coming from a homogenous viewpoint, then **they don’t accurately shape that psyche, and that in turn can impact the most vulnerable people** in our community.” (Mihi Blake, Communications expert and co-founder, Māia)

Background on Creative New Zealand

19. Creative New Zealand is the national arts development agency of Aotearoa, responsible for delivering government support for the arts. We’re an autonomous Crown entity, first established as the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council in 1964 and continued under the [Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa Act 2014](#). Creative New Zealand’s legislative purpose is *to encourage, promote, and support the arts in New Zealand for the benefit of all New Zealanders*.
20. Creative New Zealand receives funding through the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board Te Puna Tahua and Vote: Arts, Culture and Heritage. In 2022/23, Creative New Zealand **invested \$74 million in the arts**, supporting the sector through our funding, capability building, advocacy and leadership initiatives.
21. Our long-term strategic direction to 2029, set out in our [Statement of Intent 2022–2026](#), identifies the outcomes we’re seeking to achieve on behalf of all New Zealanders.
 - **Stronger arts**, as shown by:
 - High-quality New Zealand art is developed
 - New Zealand arts gain international success.
 - **Greater public engagement with the arts**, as shown by:
 - New Zealanders participate in the arts
 - New Zealanders experience high-quality arts.

- **Stronger arts sector**, as shown by:
 - New Zealand’s arts sector is resilient
 - New Zealand arts are valued and supported.

22. We contribute to achieving our outcomes and create value for New Zealanders, by delivering programmes in the following areas:

- **Investing in the arts**, including providing funding to artists, arts practitioners and arts organisations.
- **Developing the arts** through our capability building programme for artists, arts practitioners and arts organisations.
- **Advocating for the arts**, to promote the value of the arts and empower the arts sector to make the case for the arts.
- **Leadership in the arts**, to ensure the arts sector is well positioned collectively to respond to change.
- **Partnering for the arts**, to develop reciprocal relationships and partnerships that increase the impact of our collective work for the arts.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or if you wish to meet to discuss this submission further.

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa, nā

David Pannett
Senior Manager, Strategy & Engagement
Pou Whakahaere Matua, Rautaki me te Tūhono